

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

1-6 (Canceled)

7. (Currently Amended) A method for a user coupled to a network, the network for providing network services to users and comprising:

a centralized data center (CDC); [[and]]

a plurality of regional data centers (RDCs) operatively coupled to the CDC, each RDC being operatively coupled to a plurality of users by way of a communications network, each RDC maintaining for each associated user a user profile corresponding to the user; and

a plurality of local data centers (LDCs), each LDC being associated with a particular RDC and being operatively coupled to such particular RDC, each LDC being operatively coupled to a plurality of users by way of a broad-band communications network such that each user is associated with the particular RDC of the LDC and such that the particular RDC maintains for each associated user a user profile corresponding to the user,

the method comprising:

contacting the RDC;

requesting from the RDC a list of servers to use for services provided by the network for the user; [[and]]

receiving the list of servers; and

displaying corresponding service icons on an associated user display,

the method further comprising, upon the user selecting a displayed icon:

contacting the RDC to determine whether a corresponding service as installed on an associated user machine needs to be updated; and

if so,

downloading an update for the service from the associated LDC; and

installing the update on the machine,

wherein the list of servers is obtained from the user profile for the user and comprises a list of corresponding network addresses.

8. (Original) The method of claim 7 comprising, upon receiving the list of servers, employing such list to connect to appropriate servers for network services subscribed to by the user.

9-19 (Canceled)

20. (Currently Amended) A computer-executable medium having computer-readable instructions thereon for implementing a method for a user coupled to a network, the network for providing network services to users and comprising:

a centralized data center (CDC); [[and]]

a plurality of regional data centers (RDCs) operatively coupled to the CDC, each RDC being operatively coupled to a plurality of users by way of a communications network, each RDC maintaining for each associated user a user profile corresponding to the user; and

a plurality of local data centers (LDCs), each LDC being associated with a particular RDC and being operatively coupled to such particular RDC, each LDC being operatively coupled to a plurality of users by way of a broad-band communications network

such that each user is associated with the particular RDC of the LDC and such that the particular RDC maintains for each associated user a user profile corresponding to the user,

the instructions comprising modules including:

a first module for contacting the RDC;

a second module for requesting from the RDC a list of servers to use for services provided by the network for the user; [[and]]

a third module for receiving the list of servers; and

a fourth module for, upon receiving the list of servers, displaying corresponding service icons on an associated user display,

the instructions further comprising modules including, upon the user selecting a displayed icon:

a fifth module for contacting the RDC to determine whether a corresponding service as installed on an associated user machine needs to be updated; and

if so,

a sixth module for downloading an update for the service from the associated LDC; and

a seventh module for installing the update on the machine,

wherein the list of servers is obtained from the user profile for the user and comprises a list of corresponding network addresses.

21. (Original) The medium of claim 20 comprising a fourth module for, upon receiving the list of servers, employing such list to connect to appropriate servers for network services subscribed to by the user.

22-30 (Canceled)

31. (Currently Amended) A computer having computer-readable instructions thereon for implementing a method for a user coupled to a network, the network for providing network services to users and comprising:

a centralized data center (CDC); [[and]]

a plurality of regional data centers (RDCs) operatively coupled to the CDC, each RDC being operatively coupled to a plurality of users by way of a communications network, each RDC maintaining for each associated user a user profile corresponding to the user; and

a plurality of local data centers (LDCs), each LDC being associated with a particular RDC and being operatively coupled to such particular RDC, each LDC being operatively coupled to a plurality of users by way of a broad-band communications network such that each user is associated with the particular RDC of the LDC and such that the particular RDC maintains for each associated user a user profile corresponding to the user,

the instructions comprising modules including:

a first module contacting the RDC;

a second module requesting from the RDC a list of servers to use for services provided by the network for the user; and

a third module receiving the list of servers; and

a fourth module, upon receiving the list of servers, displaying corresponding service icons on an associated user display,

the instructions further comprising modules including, upon the user selecting a displayed icon:

a fifth module contacting the RDC to determine whether a corresponding service as installed on an associated user machine needs to be updated; and

if so,

a sixth module downloading an update for the service from the associated LDC; and

a seventh module installing the update on the machine,

wherein the list of servers is obtained from the user profile for the user and comprises a list of corresponding network addresses.

32. (Original) The computer of claim 31 comprising a fourth module, upon receiving the list of servers, employing such list to connect to appropriate servers for network services subscribed to by the user.

33-39 (Canceled)

40. (Currently Amended) A method in combination with a network for implementing a network-based computing environment, the network comprising:

a centralized data center (CDC);

a plurality of regional data centers (RDCs) operatively coupled to the CDC, each RDC being operatively coupled to a plurality of clients by way of a communications network,

the method for an application to implement an action at a first network location, the application being at a second network location and coupled to an RDC thereat, the method comprising:

determining over the network what clients are available at the first location and coupled to an RDC thereat, each available client having capabilities;

determining over the network what capabilities each available client at the first location has;

selecting an available client at the first location having a capability required for the action to be implemented at the first location; and

issuing a command over the network to the selected client to perform at least a portion of the action, wherein the issued command is received over the network from the application by the selected client and the selected client performs at least a portion of the action in accordance with the received command,

wherein each client at the first location is coupled to the RDC thereat by way of a gateway having information on each client at the first location, and wherein determining what clients are available at the first location comprises obtaining the information on each client at the first location from the gateway, and

wherein the gateway has information on what capabilities each available client at the first location has, and wherein determining what capabilities each available client at the first location has comprises allowing the application to obtain the information on the capabilities of each client at the first location from the gateway.

41-45 (Canceled)

46. (Original) A method in combination with a network for implementing a network-based computing environment, the network comprising:

a centralized data center (CDC);

a plurality of regional data centers (RDCs) operatively coupled to the CDC, each RDC being operatively coupled to a plurality of clients by way of a communications network,

the method for implementing an action at a first network location by way of an application at a second network location and coupled to an RDC thereat, the method comprising:

allowing the application to determine over the network what clients are available at the first location and coupled to an RDC thereat, each available client having capabilities;

allowing the application to determine over the network what capabilities each available client at the first location has, the application selecting an available client at the first location having a capability required for the action to be implemented at the first location;

facilitating issuance of a command over the network from the application to the selected client to perform at least a portion of the action; and

facilitating reception of the issued command over the network from the application by the selected client, wherein the selected client performs at least a portion of the action in accordance with the received command,

wherein each client at the first location is coupled to the RDC thereat by way of a gateway having information on each client at the first location, and wherein allowing the application to determine over the network what clients are available at the first location comprises allowing the application to obtain the information on each client at the first location from the gateway, and

wherein the gateway has information on what capabilities each available client at the first location has, and wherein allowing the application to determine over the network what capabilities each available client at the first location has comprises allowing the

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application to obtain the information on the capabilities of each client at the first location
from the gateway.

47-51 (Canceled)